DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 303 797 CS 211 643

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TITLE Jamie: One Child's Journey from Oral to Written Language. Technical Report No. 453.
INSTITUTION Bolt, Beranek and Newman, Inc., Cambridge, Mass.; Illinois Univ., Urbana. Center for the Study of Reading.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE Feb 89
CONTRACT OEG-0087-C1001
NOTE 21p.; This paper also appears in "Early Childhood Research Quarterly," 3, 1988, p193-208.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Beginning Reading; Case Studies; Early Childhood Education; *Early Reading; *Prereading Experience; Reading Readiness; Story Reading; Story Telling
IDENTIFIERS *Story Telling by Children

ABSTRACT

To investigate what and how a child was learning about reading, a case study was conducted of one preliterate child's retelling of a story. The 5-year-old child (Jamie) heard the story in its complete form on the first session and then retold it each week for 8 weeks. The adult listener answered her questions but did not help unless asked. The sessions were audiotaped and transcripts were analyzed for changes in the quality and nature of the child's retellings. Results revealed that the child nearly doubled the amount of information she told over time and that the quality of her retelling improved dramatically. Change involved elaboration of important text elements, including initiating event, problem, and resolution; rendering of characters' remarks, explaining and interpreting story events and characters' reactions; and reading some of the actual words in the story. For the first two sessions the retellings were brief. Then the child made a shift to a storytelling approach, and during the last two sessions she shifted again, attempting to read large portions of the text. The results suggest that a child who is accustomed to storybook reading at home can use a repeated retelling activity to tell a story and eventually can render it so close to the actual text that an advance into reading may occur. (Six tables of data are included, and 24 references are attached.) (SR)

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ED303797

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF READING

Technical Report No. 453

JAMIE: ONE CHILD'S JOURNEY FROM ORAL TO WRITTEN LANGUAGE

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The work upon which this publication was based was supported in part by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement under Cooperative Agreement No. OEG 0087-C1001, with the Reading Research and Education Center. The publication does not necessarily reflect the views of the agency supporting the research. This paper also appears in Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 3, 1988, 193-208.

CS211643

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Abstract

A case study was conducted of one preliterate child's retelling of a story. The child heard the story in its complete form on the first session and then retold it each week for 8 weeks. The adult listener answered her questions but did not help unless asked. The sessions were audiotaped and transcripts were analyzed for changes in the quality and nature of the child's retellings. Results revealed that the child nearly doubled the amount of information she told and that the quality of her retelling improved dramatically. Change involved elaboration of important text elements, including initiating event, problem, and resolution; rendering of characters' remarks, explaining and interpreting story events and characters' reactions; and reading some of the actual words in the story. For the first two sessions the retellings were brief. Then the child made a shift to a storytelling approach, taking on the two main characters' speech events, recalling as well as inventing appropriate dialogue between them. During the last two sessions, she shifted again, attempting to read large portions of the text. The results suggest that a child who is accustomed to storybook reading at home can use a repeated retelling activity to tell a story and eventually can render it so close to the actual text that an advance into reading may occur.

JAMIE: ONE CHILD'S JOURNEY FROM ORAL TO WRITTEN LANGUAGE

An important milestone in literacy development is an understanding of the forms of formal, written language or decontextualized language (Bruner, 1984; Heath, 1986; Sulzby, 1985; Teale, 1981; Torrance & Olson, 1985; Wells, 1985, 1986). Decontextualized language is language that is presented without the supportive context of situation. Written language is usually decontextualized while oral language is usually contextualized. According to Snow (1983), young children's first conversations rely on physically present objects or current activities and a conversational partner who has shared knowledge and who makes remarks that are familiar to the listener or that can be explained during the conversation. In an oral language situation, a speaker might point to objects or people for the listener to look at during the discussion, or a speaker could check that a listener understands what is being discussed before continuing a conversation. Neither of these options is available when reading a text.

One kind of compensation for the lack of supportive context in written language is illustrative material, such as pictures or graphs, which elaborates on text. Other kinds of compensation include advertising signs, labels on products, and other environmental print. According to Mason (1980), children move from recognition of these highly contextual texts (e.g., labels, signs, and stories that have been read repeatedly to them) to a form of reading using phonological cues along with context. Thus, it appears that pictures and easily predicted texts serve as a bridge to understanding decontextualized text. They help children to move from an immediate and direct contextual understanding to one that is historical and indirect. They enable children to connect their previous experiences with an object, event, or concept to a current text reference and to make inferences about the possible contexts that the author had in mind when writing.

Compensation for decontextualized language is also likely to occur by asking children questions about a story being read to them and responding to their comments. The evidence that reading to children is partly responsible for literacy acquisition, though indirect, is persuasive. Most parents do read to their children, some beginning before children walk or talk (Ninio & Bruner, 1978). Preschool children who later become successful readers typically have parents who often read books to them (Wells, 1986). Children who have few books of their own at home are not read to until age 4 or 5, or are read to irregularly are less likely to be good readers (Anderson & Stokes, 1984; Feitelson, Kita, & Goldstein, 1986; Teale, 1986). Studies of parent-child book reading interactions show that language interactions involve labeling, elaboration of text ideas, and connections to background knowledge (DeLoache & DeMendoza, 1986; Pellegrini, Brody, & Sigel, 1985; Snow, 1983; Snow & Ninio, 1986). Teacher-kindergarten class book reading sessions offer similar opportunities (Peterman, Mason, & Dunning, 1985; Mason, Peterman, Powell, & Kerr, 1986).

It is not a simple matter for children to make sense of written language. Snow suggests that "the young child would prefer a world in which print was contextual, predictable, and nonarbitrary" (1983, p. 176). While pictures are useful, they must obviously be distinguished from written text. This early step cannot be taken for granted. For example, Peterman and Mason (1984) found that kindergarten children who pointed to pictures instead of the text when asked, "Show me where there is something to read," were further behind classmates in their reading development. When do children become aware that the text is important? Snow (1983) described one child's emerging awareness "at 40 months [when] Nathaniel started to resist conversing about the pictures. Rather than selecting a picture and asking a question about it, he pointed to the text and said, 'Read this one'" (1983, p. 177).

We propose two steps in children's early comprehension of written text. A first step is that children look at pictures, connect them with known objects and events, relate people they know with text characters and place story characters in their own time frame and situation (Soderbergh, 1977). At this time children might look at but have no way to use printed words. Attempts to recontextualize are

evident in the kinds of errors young children make when reacting to stories that they have heard. For example, preschool children who were attempting to remember words in picture books repeatedly miscalled the words *tiger* as *cat* and *toad* as *frog*, and they could not remember the phrase *Taking tea*, which was an unfamiliar text event for them. Two children refused to accept one book's picture of a duck ("That ain't no duck"), and another child tried to explain why a horse was not pictured in a farm scene ("Must be the baby horse ran off with its mother") (Mason, McCormick, & Bhavnagri, 1986).

A second step is to connect pictured objects with both their oral language representations and with the accompanying printed labels. This integrative step is apparent when children who are given confusing labels for pictures try to match the initial letter of the print with some aspect of the picture. For example, when asked to read the word *wheel*, which was placed under a picture of a car, some children gave the word *wagon* that matched the initial consonant and was semantically related (Peterman & Mason, 1984).

How might these two steps occur? According to Snow (1983), parents who read to their children familiarize children with a purpose and way to read books. They provide decontextualized features of language in oral language: "by telling or reading stories in which the author is impersonal, the setting is made distant, diectic contrasts have to be understood from the writer's or speaker's point of view, and relatively complex language forms are used" (p. 185). In addition, they use conversation to "build 'shared histories' between mother and child" (p. 185), leading to the formation of permanent memories of book ideas.

Listening to stories permits children to acquire useful comprehension concepts from "the meaning-building organization of written language and its characteristic rhythms and structures" (Wells, 1986, p. 151). Hearing stories extends the range of children's experiences so that they have a richer mental model of the world and a more extensive vocabulary with which to express it. Furthermore, book reading provides an opportunity for "collaborative" talk: talk about a story that helps children use story dialogue and understand the significance of story events in the light of personal experiences (Cox & Sulzby, 1982).

Adults help children build meaningful written language structures during story reading sessions in four ways, according to Snow (1983). While talking to a child about the story being read, adults continue the child's preceding utterance by expanding on the remark, extending it with new information, clarifying, and answering the child's questions. Snow (1983) terms this *semantic contingency*. A second procedure is *scaffolding*, a type of framing that adults use to reduce the complexity of the task so as to help the child focus on the critical dimensions of the task. A third procedure is *accountability*, a demand that the task be completed. Fourth is *routine activity*, such as a regular bedtime reading time, rereading of a favorite book, and selection of texts that offer predictable text structures.

Our study involves a microanalysis of the effects of story retelling by a child who could not read when we began. By establishing accountability and a routine activity while releasing control of semantic contingency and scaffolding to the child, we were able to investigate what and how a child was learning about reading. We arranged regular sessions in which a child repeatedly retold the same story, and we responded appropriately to all her questions and comments that did not interfere with our questions. In this way our analyses of her initiated comments, questions, and attempts to retell the story showed what information the child could use and how her story retelling changed over time with repetition of the activity.

We looked for connections between the text the child heard when it was read to her the first week and her subsequent attempts to recall the story from the pictures or pictures and text. We focused particularly on changes in her story retelling, questions and comments, and the way she tried to carry out the task. Studying retelling over time allowed a detection not only of decontextualized language

use but also of the ways the child kept the task meaningful and at the right level of difficulty. Our goal was to show how a meaning-focused, story retelling activity functions in a child's prereading development.

Method

In this 9-week study, we analyzed the changes in the way the child, Jamie, tried to retell the story, *Danny and the Dinosaur* (Hoff, 1958) after one story reading. The book was new to her but not too difficult since there were clear pictures on each page that helped explain the brief and fairly predictable text. The book was one that she had not heard before and did not have at home, although she had checked it out once from the library. Parents were requested not to read it to her or coach her about it while the study was in progress.

Procedure. Lartz read the book to the child in the first session. For the next eight sessions, with a session occurring once a week, the child was handed the book and asked to retell it. Each story retelling was tape recorded with a session lasting for about an hour because after Jamie retold the story she was allowed to choose another activity to do. She engaged in coloring, reading other books, composing her own books, and, occasionally, listening to the just-completed story retelling on the tape recorder.

Subject. Jamie was a 5-year-old, second-born child of three from a middle class, literate family. Her parents were very supportive of early literacy activities, read frequently to her, and stressed early education of their children. Jamie often participated in family outings and school-related activities. She attended a kindergarten in which informal prereading activities such as looking at books, telling stories to classmates, and dictating sentences to the teacher were common occurrences. When we began the study, Jamie knew the alphabet and could handle books properly. She could also print some words, including family-member names and environmental-print words, but could not differentiate words from letters or sentences. She enjoyed looking at books and listening to an adult read. At the beginning of the study, when asked to read a familiar story by herself, Jamie said that she couldn't read, but with encouragement she was willing to pretend to read using her memory of the story.

Analysis. Transcripts from seven of the eight sessions in which Jamie told or read the book were analyzed in terms of (a) amount of text information, (b) use of decontextualized language features, and (c) interaction patterns between the adult and Jamie. A more limited analysis had to be done for the seventh session because inadvertently only half of it was recorded. At the end of the study, the child was also tested on her ability to read four sentences from the story out of context and then in context.

Results

The amount of information Jamie told on each occasion changed dramatically over the eight sessions and is summarized in Table 1. On the first occasion she gave 40 idea units of information, but shifted to more than double that amount by the fourth session, where it remained nearly constant for the remainder of the sessions.

[Insert Table 1 about here.]

Increases in the amount and quality of her retelling is exemplified in Table 2, where her rendition of the story introduction, story problem, and story resolution is shown for every other session. She quickly codified information for the shorter and more familiar story opening and gradually included more information regarding the problem/initiating event and resolution. By the fourth reading Jamie gave all of the information correctly for the opening. By the sixth reading she had most of the problem information and a considerable portion of the complex story resolution. Also, occasionally in the sixth

reading, and more frequently on the last reading, she tried to figure out some of the words and began to merge word reading with story telling. As a result of these later attempts to read instead of pretend read, some of the story was not told quite so smoothly.

[Insert Table 2 about here.]

It was apparent that for the first two sessions Jamie's view of her task was to retell the story from memory and from the pictures. However, by the third session, she was becoming a story teller. Relying on the pictures, she invented a dialogue, creating a more complete and interesting story. By the seventh session, she had begun to shift again toward actual reading. The interim steps between the first and eighth sessions reveal two shifts: one in the third session to dialogue and refinement of story events from picture information, and the other in the seventh session to reading parts of the actual text. In so doing, she linked events, described reactions of characters, added useful details, and explained actions. In making the second shift, she strove to achieve text accuracy. These changes are apparent in Jamie's rendering of four text sections.

The first excerpt in Table 3 demonstrates Jamie's elaboration of an event, ignoring it in the second session, giving information regarding the effect of the dinosaur's size in the fourth, describing Danny's help in the sixth, and in the eighth, giving both important ideas, although still relying primarily on picture information.

[Insert Table 3 about here.]

The second text excerpt shows Jamie's shift into a storyteller dialogue, attempting to render characters' remarks, though at first confusing the pronouns, until she had an elaborate speech interchange in the eighth session.

The third excerpt presents changes in explaining an event in terms of characters' needs and reactions. The fairly sophisticated idea here, that the children should pretend not to find the dinosaur so that he would have a good time playing with them, was not broached until the sixth session when Jamie noted briefly that the children should pretend not to see the dinosaur. By the eighth session, however, she was able to present this idea quite clearly.

The fourth shows her attempts to achieve an accurate rendition of a pictured sign. Here Jamie tried to relay information in the pictured sign. In the eighth session, she matched the number of words in the sign and corrected herself so that two of the three words were correct.

Jamie's increased use of decontextualized language forms was evident in our tabulations in Table 4 of dialogue markers and connectives. Dialogue markers increased dramatically along with a shift from a past tense to present tense accounting of much of the action. Jamie also changed her voice and gave a speech-like rendition that implied dialogue (e.g., "I wish we had a boat," said Danny. "We don't need one. I can swim anyways" [implied speech by the dinosaur]). By the last session she was using dialogue carriers almost 90% of the time.

[Insert Table 4 about here.]

As Jamie began to shift from recalling to retelling, she stopped stringing sentences with *and and then*, she shifted pronouns from *he* to *I* and *we*, and she expanded her retellings, balancing dialogue with event description to tell the story. Table 4 shows changes in connective use over time while Table 5 presents one text segment example over the eight sessions.

[Insert Table 5 about here.]

Interactions between expert and novice reader. For purposes of this study, Lartz deliberately avoided initiating interactions with Jamie during the story retelling, although she did answer all of Jamie's questions and did react to her comments. Beyond her choice of a book that was at Jamie's level of difficulty for retelling, Lartz did not adjust the task over the eight sessions. As a result, these interactions do not typify mother-child storybook interactions that Snow (1983) and others have described.

Reviewing the four ways that mothers interact with children revealed these differences. In place of **semantically contingent remarks** by the adult, these sessions were marked by text elaborations and questions by the child. In the first session Jamie asked about scribbling marks on the pages and the age of the dinosaur and commented about two pictures. In the picture that showed the dinosaur hiding, she said, "They didn't know he was there. Yeah, right there. I do!" In another she commented that the dinosaur mistook buildings for rocks, saying, "He thought they were rocks!" She continued asking about or commenting on pictured events and characters in the remaining sessions, though less frequently.

Beginning in the fourth session, Jamie asked about words and phrases with, "Are these tigers or lions?" and "Does this say apes?" Lartz responded, "No, it says some other animal. G-GIR-." Jamie interjected the right word, "Giraffes." In the fifth session she asked for help with, "I don't know what this says" and "Is this the right page?" At the end of this fifth session, Lartz was so impressed by Jamie's accurate rendition that she asked, "How'd you know what that said? Were you really reading that or looking at the picture? Jamie responded that she was reading and demonstrated by reading one of the sentences again. Lartz asked her how she did it:

Jamie: Mostly I start the words out.

Lartz: You start the words out--what?

Jamie: Like "I."

Lartz: Oh, and then you make the story up after you say a word?

Jamie: Yeah, then I start the answers.

Jamie's occasional attempt to read words became a clear goal in the seventh and eighth session when she elicited Lartz's help to read in a number of ways. Instead of telling the story smoothly, she began to pause and say words slowly or in a questioning tone. She requested more help on words or sentences, corrected her own reading errors and hesitated in a way that elicited help from Lartz. She also commented on how difficult it was to read, saying, "It's hard to read this way" and "Here comes the hard part."

Adult scaffolding of the task was not necessary. Jamie herself retained the right level of difficulty. At first she accepted the task as recalling and then modified it to be a story-telling task. When she had become skillful at story telling, she reached for a depiction of the actual words in the text. That is, when her text reconstructions were acceptable to her, she began to figure out actual words and phrases, though continued to tell some of the story, which enabled her to include some decoding without losing a sense of story meaning.

Accountability by adults during story reading was evident on two occasions. In Session 5 Jamie was reluctant to read and so Lartz asked, "Can you remember anything about Danny and the dinosaur that you could tell me about?" and then asked her to pretend that Lartz was "Jody and you tried to tell me the story--what would you tell me--how would you start out?" At the beginning of Session 7, Jamie

asked, "Don't you have other books?" to which Lartz responded, "Yeah, outside, but let's do this first." Thus, on all eight occasions Jamie completed the task.

Routine activity was evident from the way Lartz set up the sessions. She arrived each week at the same time with the book and Jamie knew what she was to do. The routine and predictability of the text itself was also a help to Jamie. She noted the repetition of some sentences (e.g., "He saw Indians. He saw bears. He saw Eskimos. He saw guns. He saw swords. And he saw a dinosaur."), and soon she was saying these more quickly. As noted earlier, she realized how the story was organized and rendered the opening, problem, and resolution sections in a consistent way.

Story telling or story reading? One would assume from the results so far described that by the last session Jamie was reading rather than telling most of the story. We certainly thought so until we tested her. Table 6 shows her attempts to read five sentences from the story out of context and then in context (but out of order) in comparison to her rendition of the same sentences during the last session. This test was given after the last session.

[Insert Table 6 about here.]

Differences between Jamie's attempts to read in and out of context demonstrate how dependent she was on both the picture and the sequence of the story itself. Out of context, she correctly identified only 1 word ("Danny") out of the 26 represented in the five sentences. With the picture context her reading improved considerably: 2 sentences and 18 words were correctly read. With picture and story continuity, she read 3 sentences and 21 words correctly. However, notice that attempts to read the text out of context involved precisely the technique she had described earlier, "Mostly I start the words out . . . then I start the answers." She chose words that began with the printed words (e.g., *have so* for *he saw*), but without pictures she didn't have enough information to "start the answers!" Jamie was in transition to actual reading, and was still heavily dependent on the story frame and picture context.

Discussion

The study reaped far more than expected. We had chosen a story-literate nonreader, a task that we expected to be difficult but not impossible for the child, and arranged repeated sessions so that the child could take the lead. While we expected her to demonstrate what she knew and to show changes in use of picture information over the length of the study, we were surprised when she began trying to read. She showed that she could recall a story. Then, presumably because of her knowledge about how stories are written, she was able to show story-telling abilities. Beyond that, and here we presume the repeated retellings are the explanation, she was able to begin reading the story. Often first-grade teachers note that they seldom are able to pinpoint that elusive shift that children make into reading. We saw Jamie begin that shift. Capturing that transition on our audiotapes was a fortuitous happening.

We propose that Jamie's movement into reading occurred not because she retold the story so many times but because she possessed sufficient knowledge of story books to use picture information and, eventually, to use letter information. She knew enough about how stories are written to mimic the written language structures by using the story dialogue feature, and she was aware of connections between letters and initial sounds of words.

The importance of letter-sound knowledge, or phonological awareness, is seldom disputed today (e.g., Stanovich, 1986). The importance of story structure, or decontextualized language, is thought to be important but there is little research to back the belief. Changes in Jamie's retelling efforts suggest that she applied her story knowledge to reconstruct a well-formed story. After the first two retellings she gave up reciting the events as "X and then Y and then Z." She began to use pronouns and other devices to connect sentences, to allow characters to tell their own story, to merge an ongoing event with

a narrative accounting, and to include characters' intents and reactions in the story. In so doing she began using first person pronouns and a variety of verb forms. Too, she told the story with engaging voice changes. Jamie recognized the key ideas of the story with an opening and closing, problem and resolution. She linked story events with explanations and prepositional structures. All of these moves--verb tense, pronoun use, dialogue, complex syntactical structure, and depiction of key ideas--brought her remarkably close to the actual text.

The transcripts suggest how Jamie used story knowledge to figure out and read portions of the text. Beginning with her limited decoding knowledge that in order to recognize words the reader forms the initial letter sound, Jamie built words and phrases from the picture context and her memory of the story sequence. We noticed her attempt to read a few words during the fifth session and, by the last two sessions, Jamie accepted the challenge of decoding larger portions of the text. She knew this was different, saying, "It's hard to read this way" and "Here comes the hard part," but having a solid understanding of the story form, she chose to persevere and continue the new task that she had set for herself.

The study of Jamie's movement into reading provides a close-up view of early reading development. It shows that a child who is accustomed to hearing stories and talking about them with adults can, with repeated retellings, be positioned to take on the greater challenge of identifying text words. Assuming Jamie's in- and out-of-context reading is representative of story-literate nonreaders, it shows that young children are extraordinarily reliant on picture and story context for word and phrase identification. Jamie, for example, recognized only 4% of the words out of context, 61% of the words with the picture, and 81% of the words with picture and story continuity. Such strikingly different percentages may occur because, at first, children lean heavily on their memory of the particular story that they are trying to read as well as on their general knowledge about how stories are formed. Thus, children who are comfortable with decontextualized language may stretch toward word recognition as they read, even with meager word recognition skills. They can be aided by a story remembering that is quite close to the actual text and they need only take a small step to render a correct reading.

What might children who go to school without a foundation of hearing, talking about, and retelling stories do with this task? We presume that their out-of-context reading attempts would be not much different from Jamie's but, without the backup knowledge of decontextualized language from hearing stories, their in-context reading would be poor. Without the memory support of story context features, they would stumble and not achieve a smooth, meaningful rendition of the text. Indeed, this is how teachers characterize failing beginning readers.

Conclusion

Over a 9-week period Jamie developed knowledge of written language style, form, and function. Her story telling became more understandable and entertaining, and she began to use an initial letter-sound decoding strategy. Her intonation patterns changed from disconnected to conversational dialogue to true reading intonation, and she took on the mannerisms of a beginning reader. The fascinating aspect of this development is that it took place without any directed instruction from an adult, although assistance and support were provided, and that substantial changes occurred in a relatively short time period.

Additional descriptive and empirical studies are needed to understand the development of written language knowledge among children who have had little home literacy experience. In addition, retelling and rereading stories ought to be studied as instructional techniques in kindergarten and first grade classrooms. Through studies of attempts to read and tell stories and investigations of home storybook reading experiences, it ought to be possible to map out ways that story-literate children shift

from oral to written language expression and to propose how to adapt these approaches for children who enter school without having had storybook reading experience.

Practical applications must await further research, though this work suggests that teachers should be aware of the importance of reading to children at home and at school and that making books available for children to pretend read and retell is beneficial, even before children can actually read. Teachers also should encourage the telling of stories. Through storytelling, children would have opportunities to hear and begin using written language structures, story intonation patterns, and dialogue carriers. They would begin to understand better how written language is formed and what it might mean.

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Table 1

Comparison Over Eight Sessions of the Amount of Story Information Told or Read

	Story Session							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
No. of Idea Units Given	40	46	71	110	106	113	---	113

Table 2

Remarks Made Regarding Story Opening, Problem, and Resolution

Opening (Text: *One day Danny went to the museum.*)

Session 2. One time Danny went to the zoo.

Session 4. One time Danny went to the museum.

Session 6. One day Danny went to the m-m-mus-museum.

Session 8. One day Danny went to the museum.

Problem (Text: *Danny loved dinosaurs. He wished he had one. "I'm sorry they are not real," said Danny. "It would be nice to play with a dinosaur." "And I think it would be nice to play with you," said a voice. "Can you?" said Danny. "Yes," said the dinosaur.*)

Session 2. He found some dinosaurs. They were big. But one of them looked at him and said, "Hi." [inaudible]. "Yes," he said.

Session 4. And he saw some dinosaurs. Danny looked at them and thought he could have one. They weren't moving. Danny said, "I'm sorry they aren't real, but if they were real, I would play with them." Then a quiet voice said, "I would like to play with you."

Session 6. And he saw some dinosaurs. He wished he could have one. He said, "I'm sorry they are not real. I wish I could play with them if they were real." "Oh, it would be nice to play with you," said a voice. "Would you?" said Danny. "Yes."

Session 8. And he saw a dinosaur. Dan liked dinosaurs. He wished he could have one--Danny loved dinosaurs. He wished he could have one. "I wish that--I am sorry they are not real," said Danny. If they were, I wish that I could have one to play with." "It would be nice to play with you," said a voice. "Would you? You would?"

Resolution (Text: *"But now I must get back to the museum. They need me there." "Oh," said Danny. "Well, goodbye." Danny watched until the long tail was out of sight. Then he went home alone. "Oh well," thought Danny, "we don't have room for a pet that size, anyway. But we did have a wonderful day."*)

Session 2. Then they had to go home and he had to go bye.

Session 4. "Can you stay?" said Danny. "No, I can't [inaudible] the museum." "Anyways that's all right 'cause we don't have much room in our house anyways," said Danny. Danny watched until the long tail was out of sight and then Danny--Danny wished that he had a dinosaur of his own.

Session 6. All the children had to go home. Then the dinosaur had to. Danny waited until the long tail was out of sight and then he went home. On the way home, "Anyways, O-o-o-oh, well, we didn't even have a room for a dinosaur anyways."

Session 8. "I have to go back to the museum." "Ok." Danny watched until the long tail was out of sight. Then Danny went home. "Oh, anyway--o-o-gee--Oh well, I didn't have room for a dinosaur, anyway," said Danny.

Table 3

Elaboration, Dialogue, Characterization, and Word Reading Changes Over Eight Story Telling Sessions

Text #1: *The dinosaur was so tall that Danny had to hold up the wires for him. "Look out!" said Danny.* [The picture shows the dinosaur about to become tangled in the wires.]

Session 2. [No comment made about this section]

Session 4. The dinosaur was too big. He got caught in the phone wire.

Session 6. Danny had to hold the wires up or the dinosaur would get caught.

Session 8. The dinosaur was too big for the wires. Danny had to hold them up to get through.

Text #2: *"Bow wow!" said a dog, running after them. "He thinks you are a car," said Danny. "Go away, dog. We are not a car." "I can make a noise like a car," said the dinosaur. "Honk! Honk! Honk!"*

Session 2. Then they found a dog. Then a dog chased but he didn't chase very long.

Session 4. A dog ran after them. He thinks they were a car and the dinosaur said, "Shoo, we are not a car. I am a dinosaur," said the dinosaur. The dinosaur said that I could make a noise like a car, mmm, mmm.

Session 6. A dog was chasing us. "Shoo, shoo, dog. We are not a car. I can make a noise like a car. Honk, honk," said the dinosaur.

Session 8. A dog was chasing them. "I am not a car. Shoo, Shoo. I can make a noise like a car," said the dinosaur. "You can?" "Yes, I can," said the dinosaur. "Honk, honk, honk."

Text #3: *"Let's play hide and seek," said the children. "How do you play it?" said the dinosaur. "We hide and you try to find us," said Danny. [text continues with dinosaur not finding the children and then the children easily find the dinosaur] "Let's make believe we can't find him," Danny said. "Where can he be? Where, oh where is that dinosaur? Where did he go? We give up," said the children. "Here I am," said the dinosaur. "The dinosaur wins," said the children. "We couldn't find him. He fooled us. Hurrah for the dinosaur!" the children cried. "Hurray! Hurray!"*

Session 2. And then they decided to [inaudible] play hide and seek. And then they [inaudible]. And then they--he tried to hide. And then he hided behind [inaudible]. And then they didn't find him, but they turned around and saw him.

Session 4. They played hide and seek. They all hided. The dinosaur could not find them. "We give up." Then it was the dinosaur's turn. He hided behind a house. They found him. He hided behind a gas tank. They found him and the dinosaur [inaudible]. The dinosaur [inaudible]. Everybody looked for him and [inaudible]. The people walked up. "Horray for the dinosaur, the dinosaur won."

Table 3 (Continued)

Session 6. "Let's play hide and seek," said the children. "I don't know how to," said the dinosaur. "You hide and we seek. And you go and close your eyes and go and hide [inaudible]." "All right." All the children ran to hide. "I can't find them. I give up." Then it was the dinosaur's turn. They closed their eyes and the dinosaur seeked. He hided behind a house. He hided behind a sign and [inaudible]. "Pretend you can't see him." He hided behind a gas tank, then--then he hided and they couldn't find him. "I give up," said the children. "Hooray for the dinosaur. The dinosaur won. Hooray for the dinosaur."

Session 8. "Want to play hide and seek?" said the kids. "Ok, ok." You seek and we hide." So they did. "Where are you? I give up." Then it was the dinosaur's turn. He hided behind a house. They saw him. He hided behind a sign. They saw him. He hided behind a gas tank. They saw him. "I think we should let him have a chance to do it." He hided behind a post. They didn't see him. "Hooray for the dinosaur. Hooray, hooray, hooray for the dinosaur."

Text #4: *"Wait," said Danny. "See what it says."* [a sign--Please keep off--is in the picture.]

Session 2. [No comment]

Session 4. "Look! Please stay off of the grass."

Session 6. "Lookit. Look at that sign. No--stay off of that grass. Stay off the grass."

Session 8. "Look! Do not--please stay off."

Table 4

Use of Decontextualized Language in Story Retelling

	Story Session							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Dialogue								
Markers	2	1	10	19	23	18	--	17
Implied Dialogue	1	2	6	16	19	34	--	29
Connectives	16	27	12	5	4	5	--	4

Table 5

Jamie's Use of Connectives, Pronouns, and Tense Markers Over Eight Story Telling Sessions

Text: *Some people were waiting for a bus. They rode on the dinosaur's tail instead. "All who want to cross the street, may walk on my back," said the dinosaur. "It's very nice of you to help me with my bundles," said a lady.*

Session 1. Then he helped the girl get across the street and then he helped everybody get across the street so the cars could get under it [Comment to Lartz: That wouldn't make very much traffic].

Session 2. [inaudible] crossed the street and then helped everybody get across the street and the cars went under [inaudible] in the street.

Session 3. Some people were riding a bus [Comment to Lartz: They are riding the dinosaur. See them. They don't know that they're riding him. They're just standing there saying, "ooh, ooh"]. "I will help you get across the street," said the dinosaur.

Session 4. Everyone waited for a bus stop. They waited on the dinosaur. "If you need to get across," said the dinosaur, "You can walk on me or if some people are riding a bike instead of walking or you can ride a bike over," said the dinosaur. "This is nice for you to help me across the street," said one lady.

Session 5. Everyone was waiting for a bus. "You don't have to walk across the street. You can walk on me," said the dinosaur. "It's very nice for you to take me across the street," said one lady.

Session 6. They rode on the dinosaur while they were waiting for a bus. "Walk on me if you want to go across. Walk on me," said the dinosaur. Everybody walked over. "It is nice for you to take me across the street," said one lady.

Session 7. People were waiting for a bus. Everyone walked on the dinosaur to get to the other side. [Comment to Lartz: People were walking this way and that way] "It is nice for you to carry me across the street," said one lady.

Session 8. The people waiting for a bus. They didn't get on the bus. They got on the dinosaur. All the people walked on the dinosaur. "It is--I think that's for you too [inaudible]."

Table 6

Reading Familiar Sentences In and Out of Context

Situation	Jamie's Response
Text: *Danny watched until the long tail was out of sight.*	
Text, no picture	Danny went a--Danny wanted a dinosaur. [To Lartz: Is dinosaur a real long word?]
Picture and text	Danny watched until the long tail was out of sight.
Picture, text, and continuity of story	Danny watched until the long tail was out of sight.
Text: *What big rocks.*	
Text, no picture	Why [response matches initial consonant]
Picture and text	What big rocks.
Picture, text, and continuity of story	What big rocks.
Text: *They are not rocks.*	
Text, no picture	T-Don't and no rr- [responses match some initial consonants]
Picture and text	[No response. To Lartz: I never read this before]
Picture, text, and continuity of story	They are not rocks.
Text: *He saw some guns.*	
Text, no picture	have so [responses match first two initial consonants]
Picture and text	He saw some guns.
Picture, text, and continuity of story	He saw a gun.
Text: *Nobody stayed to see the monkeys.*	
Text, no picture	No lions or seals
Picture and text	And they left the monkeys.
Picture, text, and continuity of story	They left the monkeys.